

# **QUALITY OF LIFE CONSUMER SURVEY**

(v2.0)

## ***INTERVIEWER ADMINISTRATION AND PROTOCOL***

**Department of Health and Human Services  
Office of Quality Improvement  
November 2005**

**PURPOSE/FOUNDATION:**

- The quality of life consumer survey is a data collection instrument.
- The quality of life consumer survey enables the state to collect information on how people feel about their services over time; services can be changed for groups or individuals based upon this and other quality assurance information that the state collects.
- Using the same survey instrument the state can continue over time to keep surveying and determining if there are improvements in how people feel about their services and supports.
- The consumer survey focuses on specific, pre-determined topics that are important indicators of quality.
- When interview questions such as these are standardized, it enhances the opportunity to reliably gather quality of life information from the responses of all the people being interviewed.

**WHO IS INTERVIEWED:**

- Individuals to be interviewed are selected by the Office of Quality Improvement
- Upon notification of sample lists, a provider will have twelve (12) months to complete interviews and submit informed consents and/or surveys to the Office of Quality Improvement.
- For information on sampling you may contact the Office of Quality Improvement.

**WHO CONDUCTS THE INTERVIEW:**

- The interview is to be conducted by a support person that knows the individual well.
- The interviewer must be qualified to conduct the interview (please see “Interviewer Qualifications”)
- The agency assigned to coordinate the survey must conduct the interviewing. Reassignment of the interview to another agency or provider is not allowed without prior approval from the Office of Quality Improvement.

**UTILIZATION FOR PERSON-CENTERED PLANNING:**

- The quality of life consumer survey is a data collection tool; therefore, it is not appropriate to use the instrument as part of the pre-planning process.
- As a data collection tool, the survey is not an open-ended interview where probative questions are asked to solicit information about a broad range of topics of interest to the person. Therefore, it is not the best pre-planning tool.

- It is recommended that the survey be administered a few months prior to pre-planning. Upon consent and approval from the individual, information gained from the survey interview may then be brought to the pre-planning process. For example, during the survey interview an individual states that s/he is not happy with her/his current living situation. Upon pre-planning, support staff may refer to the individual's statement made during the survey interview regarding home and ask the individual if s/he is interested in bringing his/her desire to move to the pre-planning process. If the consumer reiterates that s/he would like to move and okays bringing that information to the planning team, the information may be integrated into the preplanning. **AT NO TIME SHOULD THE QOL DOCUMENT BE SUBMITTED INTO PREPLANNING.**

#### **INTERVIEWER QUALIFICATIONS:**

- It is necessary that any person administering the survey be trained by DHHS' Office of Quality Improvement.
- Training must have been completed after February 1, 2003. Any individual completing training prior to the February 1, 2003 date is not considered a valid interviewer. If you have a question whether you are trained to be an interviewer, you may contact DHHS Office of Quality Improvement.
- Survey interviewer training maximizes the balance between consistencies of instrument administration and making sure that the consumer's response is a true reflection of what s/he feels.
- Training is offered quarterly in the DHHS' Portland, Augusta, Bangor and Presque Isle regional offices. You may contact your regional office's DHHS regional training coordinator for a schedule of training dates.

Region 1—Paul Tabor  
Region 2—Roxanne Rollins  
Region 3—Phil Leonard

#### **DATA REPORTS:**

- Using information from surveys, statewide and regional reports are written quarterly for the purpose of recommending changes to improve the quality of services offered to consumers.
- Reports on individual provider agencies will be developed semi-annually and will be provided at the provider's quarterly contract meeting with the regional office
- Provider's may request data information at any time by contacting the Office of Quality Improvement

- Providers have utilized quality of life survey results for annual reports, CARF accreditation, Board of Director updates, outcome development for organization services, and public relations.

## **ADMINISTERING THE QUALITY OF LIFE CONSUMER SURVEY TOOL:**

### ***INFORMED CONSENT***

- Informed consent must be reviewed with the guardian and individual prior to the individual's interview
- It is important that the guardian and consumer understand the purpose, process and risks of the consumer survey.
- The survey is voluntary.
- The guardian and interview may choose not to be interviewed, or may choose to end the interview at any time s/he chooses.

### ***Administration of the Informed Consent***

1. The interviewer will contact the consumer and/or guardian to explain the purpose and process of the review.
2. The interviewer will review the informed consent and the quality of life consumer survey to the consumer and guardian in person or by telephone.
3. A copy of the informed consent and summary, along with a copy of the consumer survey will be either given or mailed to the consumer and/or guardian.
4. The interviewer will check off each check box on the informed consent, assuring that the information is presented and all questions the consumer and guardian have regarding that item are answered to his/her satisfaction.
5. The interviewer will sign at the bottom of the informed consent, validating that all items were discussed and understood by the consumer and guardian.
6. A copy of the signed informed consent will be given or sent to the consumer and/or guardian within five (5) business days.

The responsibility to present the information to the consumer and guardian depend on the accuracy of information from the interviewer. By signing the informed consent, the interviewer is stating that the information was accurately relayed and that the consumer and guardian expressed consent to each item. By conducting the informed consent in person or by telephone, consumers and guardian (regardless of geographic residency) will be offered the same opportunity to receive information regarding the review and its process and the consumer and guardian are given the opportunity to ask questions.

## INTERVIEWING GUIDELINES

- Survey questions must be asked exactly as the question is written. In Section 1 of the survey, there are alternative questions that appear in parenthesis following the original question. These alternative questions may be used.
- If the consumer does not understand the question, the question may be rephrased only once. If the rephrased question does not elicit an answer, the interviewer must document (9), no response, unclear response.
- Do not give response options to the consumer. As an interviewer, you will need to probe for an answer that best fits one of the response options offered. Be cautious of subjective and leading probes.
- You may document only one response option per question
- Do not skip questions or rearrange questions
- If you have any concern that a certain question/s will cause discomfort to the individual contact the Office of Quality Improvement. As an interviewer, you will be supported as to how to skip the questions without compromising the data collection process. **IF YOU HAVE ANY DOUBTS AS TO THE COMFORT OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO CERTAIN QUESTION/S, CONTACT THE OFFICE OF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH THE INTERVIEW**
- If you have any questions regarding the information the question is intended to find, you may consult with the indicator crosswalk that has been provided.
- The interview may be conducted in more than one session.
- If at any time, the person becomes physically or verbally uncomfortable or asks to end the interview---promptly end. It may be appropriate to return to the questions at a later time; or it may not be appropriate at all.
- Be cautious of the environment. As an interviewer, you will have much control over the environment. It is important to create a comfortable environment that is conducive to information gathering. **IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE INTERVIEW BE A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE FOR THE CONSUMER AND GUARDIAN.**
- Many consumers may feel the interview is a test, so be conscious of your responses to the consumer's answers. As an interviewer, be supportive of a consumer's answers but do not validate "correct" answers.
- Be careful of body language, eye contact and tone of voice.

- With the consumer's approval, you may write additional notes in the margins.

## ***THE CONSUMER SURVEY***

### *Presurvey Form*

- Requests such information as individual's name and address, interviewer's name and address, supporting agency information and if consent was received.

### *Background Information*

- Seeks information from the individual's case file
- Seeks information from the day program/employer
- Is to be completed without the individual prior to the interview

### *Section 1---For the consumer only*

- In this section, we are seeking the consumer's opinion and perceptions only.
- No matter how right or wrong the responses of the consumer are, the consumer's response must be documented as communicated by the individual. As an interviewer, you will be able to document your opinion as to the understanding and accuracy in which the consumer answered the questions.
- An interpreter may be used in this section; however, the interviewer needs to be certain that the interpreter is assisting in communication and not answering for the person.
- Do not complete section I if the consumer has limited or no expressive skills and interpretation is not feasible.

### *Section 2-Informant and Consumer*

- Section 2 is to be completed by the individual and an informant who knows the individual well (guardian, ISC, case worker, day program person, or correspondent)
- Section 2 does not have an interviewer feedback form to document the interviewer's opinion of accuracy or understanding; therefore it is essential that valid answers be documented in this section.

- If there are differing opinions on an answer, the valid answer should be documented. As an interviewer who knows the individual well, you will be aware of which answers are valid and which are not. Any additional comments or perceptions may be noted in the margin.
- It is encouraged that the day program provider or employer participate in Section 2. Items such as community inclusion, rights and choices occur throughout a person's life and are not limited to residential supports.

#### *Interviewer Feedback*

- Requests documentation of the amount of time the interview took to complete.

### **INTER-RATER RELIABILITY STUDY**

- A percent of individuals selected for the review will be randomly selected for inter-rater reliability studies
- The inter-rater is a representative of the Office of Quality Improvement
- The inter-rater will be present for the consumer survey and will document responses independent of that of the interviewer.
- Objective of the inter-rater reliability study will be to measure the variance on the interviewer's interpretation of consumer responses.
- The interviewer coordinating the survey should notify Bridget at the Office of Quality Improvement to arrange for a time and location for the interview when a consumer has been selected for the inter-rater reliability study.

## **WHAT DO I DO WITH THE SURVEY WHEN I AM DONE:**

- When you are finished with the interview, send a copy of the survey and informed consent to the following address:

Bridget Bagley  
DHHS—Office of Quality Improvement  
11 State House Station  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Marquardt  
Augusta, ME 04333

Telephone: 287-7313  
Fax: 287-4291  
E-Mail: [bridge.bagley@maine.gov](mailto:bridge.bagley@maine.gov)

- Keep the original survey and informed consent in the consumer's case file.

For additional materials or questions, you may contact Bridget at the Office of Quality Improvement at (207) 287-7313.